

COMMITTEE ON LANDS AND BUILDINGS

March 28, 2001

5:15 PM

Chairman Cashin called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Cashin, Gatsas, Levasseur, Shea

Absent: Alderman Thibault

Messrs.: Alderman Vaillancourt, Robert MacKenzie, Jay Taylor,
Steve Tellier

Chairman Cashin addressed item 3 of the agenda:

3. Report of committee recommending that a request of M. Jeanne Trott to purchase two (2) parcels of land located at the corner of North Bay and Bennington Streets be denied; and further that the Board adopt a resolution prohibiting erection of structures or removal of trees to allow the property to remain in its natural state referred back to committee by the Board on February 20th.

Chairman Cashin stated it is my understanding is that there is going to be a meeting at Webster School sometime in April and my recommendation is that we table this until after that meeting.

Alderman Shea moved to table item 3. Alderman Gatsas duly seconded the motion. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Chairman Cashin addressed item 4 of the agenda:

4. Report of committee advising that it has reviewed the communication from the Director of Planning regarding the possible land acquisition of a piece of property on the westerly edge of Wolf Park referred back to committee and the City Solicitor for further review by the Board on February 20th.

Chairman Cashin stated my recommendation and the recommendation of the Highway Department is that an offer be made on the land not to exceed \$31,000...I think we've discussed this.

Alderman Levasseur asked does anybody know how we came up with these numbers.

Chairman Cashin replied it came from the Highway Department, it's in your packet someplace.

Alderman Shea stated I'm not in disagreement but there are taxes owed on that property, Mr. Chairman, is that part of the thirty-one.

Chairman Cashin stated if the price was agreeable to both parties, I think we ought to try and negotiate the back taxes, I think that would be the fair thing to do.

Alderman Gatsas asked how much are the back taxes, do we know.

Chairman Cashin replied about \$21,000.

Alderman Gatsas stated so that is a net of ten.

Chairman Cashin stated it would probably net out to about that.

Alderman Gatsas stated you're talking about \$31,000 less the net, is that the motion we're voting on.

Chairman Cashin replied I think that could be negotiated, it's possible if you want to sit down and both parties agree to the \$31,000, you might negotiate the taxes and maybe we'd pick up the taxes. I think that should be negotiated between the Assessors and the buyer. How much is the land worth if it's assessed at thirty-one. The owner is saying it's "X" number and we're saying...and the difference between the two is excessive, it really is. What I would recommend is that we make an offer and let them work that out with the Assessors Office.

Alderman Levasseur stated if we make an offer that's it.

Alderman Shea stated I'm all set with that and moved to Chairman Cashin recommendation that the City make an offer not to exceed \$31,000, let them work that out with the Assessors Office and report back to Committee. Alderman Levasseur duly seconded the motion. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Chairman Cashin addressed item 5 of the agenda:

5. Communication from Jay Taylor advising of antenna lease fees received relating to the Hackett Hill property and requesting the Board establish a special non-lapsing account dedicated to help offset future expenses required as a result of the development of the proposed business park.

Alderman Levasseur moved for discussion. Alderman Gatsas duly seconded the motion.

Alderman Gatsas stated I do not have a problem with this, I would just like...before any expenses are paid that it comes back to the review of the Board.

Mr. Taylor stated let me explain why I'm doing this...to give you a little background. As part of the planning process for Hackett Hill we're going to need to spend something in the order of another \$25,000 to do a Wetlands Study and a Wildlife Study to make sure that we are not disturbing any unusual flora and fauna there and it just seemed logical to me since the money generated by these antenna rents comes from the Hackett Hill property, it might be a good idea to put it back and then instead of coming to you every 15 minutes to nickel and dime you for money we'd have some money to use for those related expenses with the understanding that each time we need to spend it we'd have to come back to the Board to get permission to do so. I'm not looking for a blank check here, so any money we spend we would come back through the process. So, that's the premise behind this request.

Alderman Shea asked, Jay, are there any residents that have had any input with this in terms of any environmental concerns that they might have with any antennas that may be close to where the property might be.

Mr. Taylor replied no because these antennas are located on the water tower and there are no residences in close proximity to that.

On motion of Alderman Levasseur, duly seconded by Alderman Gatsas it was voted that the Board establish a special non-lapsing account with antenna lease fees received relating to the Hackett Hill property, which would be dedicated to help offset future expenses required as a result of the development of the proposed business park.

Chairman Cashin addressed item 6 of the agenda:

6. Request of Salvation Army for City to donate land located at 144 Auburn Street (Map 68, Lot 32).
(Note: referred to Assessor's for property value.)

Alderman Levasseur voted to have the City retain ownership but allow the Salvation Army the right to park on the property from 7:00 AM till 5:00 PM Monday thru Friday only (free), but then allow everyone else the right to park at metered expense. Alderman Shea duly seconded the motion. There being none opposed, the motion carried.*** (See note from Clerk following minutes.)

Chairman Cashin addressed item 7 of the agenda:

7. Communication from PSNH seeking acquisition of two City easements as outlined herein.
(Note: As PSNH has requested that this matter be expedited, memos were sent to the Assessor, City Solicitor, Economic Development Director, Public Works Director, Planning Director and Traffic Director asking for a report back to the Committee in care of the City Clerk's Office by 3/21/2001.)

On motion of Alderman Levasseur, duly seconded by Alderman Shea, it was voted that a request from PSNH seeking acquisition of two City easements in the vicinity of its 780 North Commercial Street property be granted and approved recommending that such easements be conveyed for the price of \$4,250, considered to be fair compensation as determined by the Board of Assessors; and, further recommending that the Mayor be authorized to execute any and all related documents subject to the review and approval of the City Solicitor.

Chairman Cashin addressed item 8 of the agenda:

8. Communication from Barbara Vigneault, Director of Elderly Services, relative to the lease agreement between Grossman Companies, Inc. of Quincy, Massachusetts and the City of Manchester Elderly Services Department.

On motion of Alderman Levasseur, duly seconded by Alderman Shea, it was voted that the City terminate the lease agreement with Grossman Companies, Inc. for the Elderly Services Department and not exercise the option of renewal prior to May 1, 2001 noting that such lease will expire on November 1, 2001.

TABLED ITEMS

On motion of Alderman Shea, duly seconded by Alderman Levasseur, it was voted to remove items 9, 10 and 11 from the table for discussion.

9. Communication from John Marchwicz requesting to purchase a parcel of land known as Map 218, Lot 21 located on Crescent Lane.
(Tabled 9/18/00 pending reports from Planning and Tax.)

Mr. MacKenzie stated I'm generally familiar with this site, I had asked a staff member to just verify that we saw no purpose...I didn't see any particular purpose, it's down in the vicinity of Crystal Lake area. There are a number of tax deeded properties down in that area that should, at some point, go back on the tax rolls. I think our only concern is whether some parcels we may want to add to the Crystal Lake Park, but I do not believe that this particular parcel is adjacent to the park.

Alderman Levasseur asked do you make the recommendation, Mr. MacKenzie that we sell this property or we allow this purchase to go through, did we negotiate a price with them or do you just want to go forward with that to negotiate.

Mr. MacKenzie replied again, I am not as familiar with this particular piece... there was a staff member and I don't know if any other City staff have dealt with this particular one.

Chairman Cashin asked Mr. Tellier, do you have an assessment on the property.

Mr. Tellier replied yes, Mr. Chairman, we have a letter dated January 26, 2000 that lists...excuse me, July 31, 2000...that lists a value range of four to five thousand. This is mostly residual land in an area surrounding Crystal Lake, extremely dense lots, very clustered housing, however, the property is not adjacent to the park. It's more on the back side and closer to the Bodwell Road area.

Alderman Levasseur asked has the valuation gone up since this last valuation was done, do you think this is a fair price.

Mr. Tellier replied I think this is a fair price.

Alderman Shea stated this is dated September 18th and it says that "it is the opinion of this Board that \$15,000 shall stand as a fair and justifiable value", it says "27,667 square feet of land."

Mr. Tellier stated yes that is correct, I was reading from the wrong page. The comments surrounding the area is still accurate. When we went out to take a look at that property, it's extremely dense housing...this would mostly construe residual land and the \$15,000 is accurate; that's the accurate price that we put on that because of the size of the area of the land.

Chairman Cashin stated so your recommendation is \$15,000...Planning Board has no reason for us not to dispose of it, is that basically what I'm hearing here.

Alderman Gatsas asked is that a buildable lot.

Mr. Tellier replied it didn't appear so from our review of the land. As I stated these lots only go 70 deep and I would lend itself to Mr. MacKenzie, but we were under the impression that it was not.

Mr. MacKenzie stated at the present time it is not a buildable lot. There is no sewer to this area. In the next couple of years there will be sewer and it may be a buildable lot, but at the present time it is not.

Alderman Gatsas asked who is the abutter to the back side of this property, do you know.

Mr. Tellier replied I don't have that information at present, it is not evident on this map nor did I do that review. We were responding to a request on value to the abutters request to purchase to this committee, so we were responding to that.

Alderman Gatsas stated the gentleman who is looking to buy is an abutter.

Mr. Tellier replied yes.

Alderman Gatsas asked where is he an abutter to.

Mr. Tellier replied I don't have that marked out on the map, Alderman. I thought he was to the right, but I can't quantify that, I'm not sure. This was dated sometime ago, I'd have to revisit to answer that accurately.

Alderman Levasseur stated, Alderman Gatsas, I think you're think that in a couple of three years it will be a buildable lot and we should get a higher value or...

Alderman Gatsas replied no, I'd just like to know who the abutter to the backside is so if this all of a sudden it's not buildable today, but if somebody owns the back land and the lots start running the other way then all of a sudden the value of it is much different because the street frontage is on Crescent Lane.

Alderman Levasseur asked did you want to table and then come back to this on the next one with a more up-to-date recommendation, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Cashin replied it's been here so long...

Alderman Vaillancourt stated I just wanted to give you an idea of where this is...this is off West Shore in that area down by Crystal Lake where there are numerous little, tiny side streets, really some of the houses down there are used mostly for summer camps although some people do live there year-round. I just want to give you an idea of where it is.

Alderman Gatsas asked do you know what's behind it.

Alderman Vaillancourt replied I'm not exactly sure, I'd have to go down and look. But, there are lots of little interweaving streets and that kind of area...what would they want to use this for.

Mr. Tellier replied my understanding from the intent and the spirit of the letter is they were just looking for a little bit more space. As Alderman Vaillancourt indicated they are extremely small lots as well as the width of the streets. The width of the streets are generally about 20 feet, they're more like lanes than they are streets. So, my understanding from this request...they were looking for some additional buffer land to consolidate with their present lot.

Chairman Cashin stated if it is the will of the committee to have it remain tabled until the next meeting it's okay with me.

Alderman Gatsas stated let's do a complete analysis of the entire area, so that we can have something done to understand.

Mr. Tellier replied absolutely. I'll have that for the next committee meeting.

On motion of Alderman Shea, duly seconded by Alderman Levasseur, it was voted that item 9 remain on the table.

10. Communication from Sheila M. Grace requesting to purchase property located on River Road known as Map 222/Lot 79.
(Tabled 9/18/00 pending reports from Planning and Tax.)
11. Communication from Ronald and Kathleen Gosselin requesting to purchase property known as Map 750/Lot 11 located on Pond Drive.
(Tabled 4/4/00 pending reports from Assessors and Tax.)

Mr. MacKenzie stated this property has come up before, it's been offered a couple of times to abutters and we've responded in the past to this particular parcel. It is land-locked, there is no public street access to it, so we do believe that it is reasonable to sell to an abutter. Again, in this case, I think there was only one abutter interested, but I'm not the one that went out and checked the other abutters. So, the same question may apply.

Alderman Levasseur moved to the recommendation that a fair and justifiable value in the range of \$4,000 to \$5,000 would be appropriate. Alderman Shea duly seconded the motion.

Alderman Levasseur asked was there a person who requested this, Bob, or were you just going around...

Chairman Cashin replied Sheila Grace requested it, she wants to purchase it. Have we checked the abutters.

Mr. Tellier replied we haven't, however, it was generally known that this was City land. There was no interest at all except for this individual who has a letter and the previous owner of the same house had an interest in this property, as well. However, they decided to sell the home...the new owner being the writer of this letter and has spoken of interest and they wish to buy it...there has been no interest. This particular parcel has been floating around for several years now and this is the only interested party we've had.

Alderman Gatsas asked what has been the procedure in the past. Do we notify abutters that somebody is interested in the property and wouldn't it make sense that maybe we say it's worth five, but the abutter next door might be willing to pay seven. Wouldn't we want to do the same thing on the one on Crescent if there's an abutter there. Why wouldn't we do that with every piece of property.

Mr. Tellier replied with respect to the process we're responding to a letter from this committee that goes through the Clerk to our office as to an opinion of value. As to the direct process on notification of abutters or to try to get the highest and best bid.

Chairman Cashin stated this is what I'd like to recommend to the committee...we'll retable items 9, 10 and 11 until the next meeting with the understanding that the Assessors, Planning and/or City Clerk send out letters to the abutters that the land is being considered to be sold, so everybody knows it and at the next meeting I want some answers, okay. Some of this stuff has been here for over a year, there's no reason for this.

Alderman Levasseur moved to retable items 9, 10 and 11 at the recommendation of the Chairman. Alderman Shea duly seconded the motion. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

OTHER BUSINESS

Report on Senior Center to be presented by Robert MacKenzie, Director of Planning.

Mr. MacKenzie stated we do have most of the report available. There are two pieces that are important parts to the puzzle which are not available tonight and those are both financial pieces. They did receive...we could not provide that information to the Finance Department until we had all the engineering/architectural work done. We will provide the text of most of the report to you, but would suggest to you to have a full presentation when we get the financial information and there's some bond analysis that has to be done and there's the financial analysis of what if the City consolidated departments at the Sears site. So, those two are underway and should be done shortly. I spoke with the Finance Department yesterday and that will be done soon.

Chairman Cashin asked, Bob, when you say soon, I want a date...when.

Mr. MacKenzie replied I think it was...I would not want to speak for the Finance Department, but I suspect that they could have that done this week.

Chairman Cashin asked if I was to call a special meeting for next week can we address this.

Mr. MacKenzie replied everything else is ready except for those pieces and my discussions yesterday was that they were close to finishing, so I believe we could do that.

Chairman Cashin stated let's meet on Monday, April 2nd at 6:00 PM. Bob, I'm going to have the City Clerk's Office notify Finance to get with you first thing tomorrow or whenever realizing that we want to meet Monday, hopefully, as early as possible so we can discuss this and I want to be able to make some recommendations to the full Board on Tuesday, okay.

Mr. MacKenzie asked do you want to see the balance of the package or would you rather wait until the entire package is ready.

Chairman Cashin replied I think it would be better if we saw it all together, but if you've got the package together be sure that the members get a copy prior to the meeting so that we can look it over and have some idea, can you do that.

Mr. MacKenzie asked do you want all Board members to receive it.

Chairman Cashin replied send it to the whole Board.

Mr. MacKenzie stated, Mr. Chairman, could I just note one other issue regarding that package...there is one appraisal in the package that for various reasons after discussing with the City Solicitor that for the present time we may want to keep confidential, so we will release most of the report to the media, but there is one appraisal in there and I'd be happy to explain why, but there is one appraisal that we prefer that the committee and the members of the Board kept confidential at this time.

Chairman Cashin stated just pull it out so it won't be in the package that's all and when we discuss it Monday, if it's a recommendation of the City Solicitor that we meet in non-public session to discuss it, we'll do it in non-public session.

Alderman Levasseur asked are you going to be able to provide members of the Board with this information Friday so we can go over this over the weekend or are we going to be given this Monday.

Chairman Cashin replied we will get it Friday.

Mr. MacKenzie stated we will try to get the package together and delivered...can I ask the Clerk's Office if it can be delivered Friday if we had the materials from Finance Friday morning.

The Clerk replied yes. We would have to have it by twelve or one o'clock at the very latest.

Chairman Cashin stated try to have it Thursday to make it easy on everybody. I want to apologize to the people who are here to discuss the center because I know that is what you're here for and I'm sorry we don't have the information for you, but we will meet Monday and that will be the only item on the agenda.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, on motion of Alderman Shea, duly seconded by Alderman Levasseur, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

Clerk of Committee

*** **Re: Item 6 --**

Request of Salvation Army for City to donate land located at 144 Auburn Street (Map 68, Lot 32).

(**Note:** from Clerk's Office. After further review it was found that the City does not own this property and, therefore, a report was not submitted to the full Board at this time. If the property is tax-deeded in May 2001, the request will be brought back before the Committee for findings as required by law.)